

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 4, lines 15–23 with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

According to one aspect of the invention there is provided a method of reducing the ~~ethanol~~ alcohol content of an alcohol containing beverage ~~which includes ethanol and volatile components~~ including the steps of:

~~separating the beverage into first and second streams, the first stream including ethanol and the volatile components and the second stream including ethanol but none or little of the volatile components;~~

~~——— contacting the second stream with a strip solution to produce a treated second stream to reduce the ethanol concentration thereof; and~~

~~——— mixing the treated second stream with the first stream whereby the ethanol content of the beverage is reduced but the volatile components remain substantially unchanged~~

~~——— (i) processing the beverage by reverse osmosis or nanofiltration for producing a retentate and a raw permeate which includes alcohol;~~

~~——— (ii) contacting a first side of an hydrophobic microporous membrane with said raw permeate;~~

~~——— (iii) contacting a second side of the membrane with a strip solution to extract alcohol therefrom to form a dealcoholised permeate; and~~

~~——— (iv) combining the retentate with the dealcoholised permeate to form a dealcoholised beverage which has an alcohol content lower than that of the beverage.~~

Please delete the paragraph of the specification on page 4, line 25 – page 5, line 3.

Please replace the paragraph at page 7, lines 1–15 with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

The invention also provides apparatus for reducing the alcohol content of an alcohol containing beverage, the apparatus including:

- (i) a first processing stage having a reverse osmosis unit or nanofiltration unit having a retentate outlet and permeate outlet;
- (ii) a pump for supplying beverage to be treated under pressure to the first processing stage whereby retentate is produced at the retentate outlet and raw permeate containing alcohol is produced at the permeate outlet;
- (iii) a second processing stage which includes at least one hydrophobic microporous membrane, the second processing stage having ~~[[an]]~~ a first inlet for receiving said raw permeate and a second inlet for receiving a strip solution, the membrane being operable to allow alcohol from the raw permeate to pass therethrough to the strip solution to thereby remove at least a portion of the alcohol from the raw permeate so as to produce dealcoholised permeate at an outlet of the second processing stage; and
- (iv) means for combining said dealcoholised permeate with said retentate to thereby produce dealcoholised beverage in which the alcoholic content thereof is lower than that of the beverage.

Please delete the paragraph of the specification on page 5, lines 17-31.